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United Nations Development Fund for Women

United Nations Development Fund for Women*
Note by the Executive Director

Summary

The core business of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is to support countries in implementing commitments to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. This is the single goal of the UNIFEM strategic plan, 2008-2011, endorsed by the Executive Board at its second regular session 2007. It provides an overarching framework for UNIFEM programming and technical and financial support to countries. Last year, 2007, marked the final year of the UNIFEM multi-year funding framework (MYFF). The present note provides an overview of cumulative progress towards the results identified in the MYFF, as well as highlights of the support that UNIFEM provided to countries in 2007.

*The compilation of data required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present report.

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I. Introduction

1. The past year was one of opportunity, challenge and change for UNIFEM. Debates in the inter-governmental arena, civil society and other fora intensified on how to strengthen ability of the United Nations system to support countries in advancing gender equality, a goal supported by the United Nations Secretary-General. UNIFEM engaged in intensive consultations on – and secured approval of – its strategic plan, 2008-2011 from the Executive Board. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) recommended the approval of the first results-based biennium support budget (BSB) of UNIFEM. In 2007 UNIFEM registered significant growth in its resource base, breaking the $100 million mark, as well as securing (and, in fact, surpassing) the 2007 and the MYFF targets for regular ('core') and other ('non-core') resources.

2. The year 2008 marks the mid-point of the 15-year period during which Member States have agreed to reach the Millennium Development Goals. With gender equality and women's empowerment recognized as goals in their own right, as well as central to achieving all of the international development goals – including the Millennium Development Goals, – the work of UNIFEM and other gender-specialist organizations is of great importance. There is a critical need to ensure that UNIFEM has the capacity, influence, focus and resources to fulfil its dual mandate of providing direct assistance at the country level while being a key driver to assist the United Nations system in adequately supporting countries as they advance gender equality and women's empowerment in line with national priorities.

II. Context

3. United Nations reform has been a consistent aspect of the context in which UNIFEM operates. In 2007, changes in development assistance, framed by the Paris Declaration and the aid effectiveness agenda, had a significant influence on UNIFEM programming, as did new opportunities and challenges related to United Nations reform processes. A key role for UNIFEM is to build knowledge and capacity among gender equality advocates so as to strengthen gender equality in those processes.

4. The Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Security Council resolution 1325, the Millennium Development Goals, and a growing number of national and regional action plans, laws and policies on gender equality, frame the work of UNIFEM in support of gender equality. In 2007, UNIFEM intensified its support for developing sustainable national capacity in the implementation of, and accountability for, commitments to gender equality by continuing to focus on four key goals: reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; addressing the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance. The prospects and gaps worldwide, nationally and regionally in relation to those four goals determine the focus of the work of UNIFEM.

III. MYFF 2004-2007: Development effectiveness

A. Outcome 1: Legislation and policies at national and regional levels are formulated and implemented to promote and protect women's human rights.

5. Laws and policies that reinforce discrimination and exclusion also foster unequal power relations. Gender equality advocates have addressed this by pressing for removal of discriminatory provisions from existing laws and policies and for introduction of a legal framework aligned with commitments to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international and regional normative frameworks. By the end of 2007, 185 countries had ratified the Convention, and 90 have ratified its optional protocol.

6. Between 2004 and 2007 UNIFEM contributed to strengthening legal and policy frameworks in 90 countries, removing gender-discriminatory provisions in nine countries; introducing or implementing laws and policies to promote women's rights in 38 countries and two regional bodies; strengthening gender-equality provisions in constitutions in five countries; and mobilizing additional resources for gender equality by bringing a stronger gender equality perspective to national development strategies and/or poverty reduction strategies in 13 countries. Together with United Nations partners, UNIFEM provided support to over 80 countries in reporting on and/or strengthening capacity to implement the Convention.

Laws and policies to promote women's human rights and advance gender equality

7. To build and strengthen legal mechanisms that empower women, UNIFEM works towards the creation, approval and implementation of gender equality policies and legislation, as well as towards sector-specific policies and legislation, including those on reducing feminized poverty, ending violence against women, and strengthening democratic governance. In 2007, in addition to assisting many countries in this regard, UNIFEM supported the formulation of a regional gender policy for the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In many cases, initiatives involve the provision of experts to national women's machineries and supporting consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to devise, for example, a draft a law on gender parity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a draft national gender policy in Liberia, and a law to end gender discrimination that incorporates the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Mauritania. In other cases, UNIFEM focuses on the implementation process, as in Viet Nam, where it is supporting capacity development among national assembly members and the chief justices of provincial courts to implement the gender equality law that came into effect in 2007.

8. In addition to overarching gender equality policies and legislation, UNIFEM contributed to progress in reducing feminized poverty through support for 57 interventions to strengthen relevant legal or policy frameworks in 37 countries over the past four years, working with national and United Nations partners. UNIFEM support focuses on context-specific opportunities and challenges, including enhancing rural women's access to land, property and inheritance rights in the Commonwealth of Independent States and in West Africa; strengthening gender dimensions of agricultural policy, including in West Africa; providing assistance to organizing strategies of women home-based workers and migrant women workers in the Arab States and Asia; and expanding economic options for women producers in countries recovering from armed conflict and for those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS in Southern and Western Africa.

9. UNIFEM has documented catalytic efforts to strengthen policies to protect the rights of women migrant workers. Its programme to support women migrant workers in Asia and the Arab States was launched in 2001. A cornerstone of the programme is to bring government representatives from countries of origin and destination together to ensure that the rights of migrant women are protected, and to build knowledge and awareness among migrant women workers about their rights.

10. The results of this work in countries of origin can be seen in Nepal, which in 2007 adopted a foreign employment act removing discriminatory provisions (including an embargo on women traveling to Gulf States). Nepalese women migrants now receive information about the contractual obligations of employers and about migrant assistance centres in destination countries. Passage of the law was facilitated by the national network of migrant women workers in partnership with the Migrants Forum for Asia. Nepalese women have also partnered with the organization Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility, Asia, to safeguard migrant women workers' rights in Hong Kong, Israel, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

11. With regard to ending violence against women, UNIFEM focuses on this goal area through direct support to partners at the national and regional levels. The United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, administered by UNIFEM, also focuses on this area. The Secretary-General's report *In-depth study on all forms of violence against women* indicated that 89 countries now have some form of legal provision against domestic violence, 93 on trafficking in persons and 90 against sexual harassment, while in 104 countries, marital rape may be prosecuted. UNIFEM contributed to strengthening laws and policies on violence against women, registering progress in 38 countries in 2007 compared to 35 in 2006, 13 in 2005 and 14 in 2004. Of these initiatives, about 40 per cent focused on domestic violence, 30 per cent on general violence against women, 15 per cent on trafficking and 5 per cent on female genital mutilation or sexual harassment. Programmes are increasingly working with police and justice systems, as well as with men and boys, to focus more systematically on the implementation of laws and policies.

12. In the area of democratic governance, UNIFEM works with a wide range of United Nations partners, most often UNDP, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to assist national partners in assessing need and in drafting, passing and implementing positive action laws and policies for women's political participation, including in post-conflict countries. During the period of its MYFF, it did so in 16 countries and regionally in the context of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. In 2007, for example, UNIFEM supported the University of Indonesia in reviewing five laws related to the electoral process and political parties. Findings were endorsed by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment, which proposed amending existing laws to establish a quota for women.

13. With regard to promoting gender equality in the financing for development and aid effectiveness debates, UNIFEM has embarked on a multi-pronged strategy, especially in the lead-up to the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana, to take place in September 2008, and the follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha in December 2008. In 2007, focusing on building the capacity of gender equality advocates to navigate within the new frameworks, UNIFEM co-sponsored regional consultations on gender equality and aid effectiveness with host country governments in Africa (Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia), the Asia-Pacific region (Indonesia) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (Kazakhstan), which brought together representatives from governments – including national women's machineries and

planning officials – legislatures, civil society, and United Nations and donor organizations to build partnerships and devise strategies for ensuring attention to gender equality in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Participants adopted recommendations in declarations intended to feed into national, regional and global discussions on further implementing the Paris Declaration that will be articulated in the Accra Agenda for Action.

14. UNIFEM has translated the concrete recommendations from these consultations into programming and the creation of a broader knowledge base on gender equality and aid effectiveness. In 2007, with the European Commission and the International Labour Organization International Training Centre, it launched the Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace (www.gendermatters.eu). This includes analysis and dissemination of national mapping studies on the impact of new aid modalities on gender equality and women's empowerment in 12 countries, and the development of country-specific indicators to monitor the impact of the Paris Declaration on gender equality.

15. For the past three years, UNIFEM has been supporting national partners in developing a systematic approach to mainstream gender equality priorities into national development strategies. This involves facilitating national multi-stakeholder technical teams to align national commitments under the Millennium Development Goals, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action into a consolidated set of indicators and priorities; and sharpening advocacy and lobbying skills. Concrete achievements are now being secured in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan. For example, the national development strategy of Tajikistan commits the Government to ensuring equal access for men and women to economic resources; to support female entrepreneurship; and to implement the Presidential decree on a quota for higher education for rural girls and boys. The Kyrgyzstan national development strategy supports temporary special measures for both elective and executive offices to increase political representation of women, and commits the Government to undertake gender analysis of school curricula and textbooks, take into account gender differences in pension reform, and implement measures to end violence against women; and the Georgia Economic Recovery and Poverty Reduction Paper includes a commitment to improve the gender-responsiveness of labour legislation, reduce harmful practices against women – including family violence – and implement a four-year plan to implement gender equality, as adopted in the political statement of the Parliament.

Challenges and lessons learned

16. The MYFF evaluation found that UNIFEM support to changing policies and laws was "one of its strongest areas of work", but that its reports "provide little information on the degree to which legislative changes have been implemented and to what changes … they have contributed". There is a lack of knowledge as to what is required to move from commitment to action on gender equality. This is a key area of focus in the new strategic plan and the topic of an in-depth exploration in *Progress of the World's Women 2008*.

B. Outcome 2: Mainstream institutions demonstrate leadership, commitment, technical capacity and accountability for gender equality.

17. Moving from commitment to implementation and accountability for gender equality means that the mainstream institutions that generate policies and services need to strengthen capacity for delivering to women and girls. At the heart of effective gender mainstreaming in any institution is the re-shaping of incentive systems to support better

responses to women's needs; changing performance measures so that services to meet women's needs are recorded and rewarded; incorporating gender-responsive budgeting; and institutionalizing effective leadership to champion gender equality and women's rights. In the last three years, UNIFEM documented support nearly 90 countries in this outcome area.

Sex-disaggregated data

18. The focus on the Millennium Development Goals has increased interest in the production and use of sex-disaggregated data by Member States, and increasingly in the identification and use of a broader range of measurements of gender equality, including gender-based violence and feminized poverty. UNIFEM supported the long-term process of institutional change towards gender equality throughout the MYFF period by strengthening the capacities of national and local partners to institutionalize tools such as sex-disaggregated data (over 50 instances) and gender-responsive budgets (over 30 countries). In 2007, UNIFEM contributed to positive institutional changes with a broader range of national and regional partners, including ministries of finance, planning, labour, and justice; law enforcement; parliaments; national AIDS councils; municipalities; regional organizations; and private-sector partners.

Policies, programmes and resource allocations of mainstream organizations

19. UNIFEM support for gender-responsive budgeting in ministries of finance is having an effect on institutional policies and practices and on resource allocations. In Morocco, call circulars over the past three years have included requirements to mainstream gender in plans, budgets and performance monitoring indicators. The Ministry of Finance has also taken the lead in supporting the preparation of gender budget reports by sectoral ministries. In Ecuador, the UNIFEM programme of support with the Council for Women has assisted the Ministry of Finance to introduce a specific budget line to track sectoral investments in implementing the equal opportunity plan. In Bolivia, UNIFEM-supported advocacy by the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral led to municipal budget guidelines that require municipalities to allocate resources to programmes that promote gender equality and provide services for women survivors of violence.

20. In 2007, the UNIFEM-executed and UNDP-supported programme *Enhancing Protection from Gender Based Violence in Rwanda,* which supports women's networks to provide training in responding to domestic violence cases, expanded its work with the Rwanda Defence Forces, jointly training a total of 2,293 military officers, including 598 deployed in a peace mission in Darfur. A gender coordinating desk has been established within the Defence Forces with focal points attached at brigade and battalion levels; this has been replicated by Sudan and Burundi. The police officers trained in the Rwanda programme have been called upon by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA to share their experiences in Belgium and South Africa, respectively.

21. Bringing a gender-equality perspective to judicial and justice sector institutions is critical to women's ability to gain access to justice. Capacity development and South-South exchanges for the staff of such institutions is a key strategy that has yielded concrete results. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women programme in Southeast Asia, which started in 2004, supported the training of supreme court and appellate court judges, representatives of judicial training institutions, and advocates for a gender responsive judiciary in 2007, in accordance with a gender-equality education model introduced by resource persons from the Asia Pacific Forum on Judicial Education on Equality. A regional networking of judges, judicial training institutions and activists has since been formed.

Challenges and lessons learned

22. Throughout the MYFF period, the work on gender-responsive budgeting has consistently yielded concrete results in terms of strengthening the internal policies and procedures of government ministries on gender equality. However, whether using gender-responsive budgeting or other entry points, institutional transformation is a long-term process requiring enduring commitments, in-depth support and clear benchmarks. This effort could be enhanced by developing more clear-cut indicators on the process of institutional change toward gender equality, which will be a key priority in the next strategic plan, 2008-2011.

C. Outcome 3: Gender equality advocates have knowledge and are positioned to spearhead and transform policies, programmes and resource allocations.

23. UNIFEM supports and/or facilitates enhanced capacities of national and regional networks of gender equality advocates to secure more gender-equitable policies, programmes and resource allocations. UNIFEM supports Ministries of Women's Affairs, women legislators, and specialized groups, such as networks on HIV and women, migrant women, indigenous and rural women, and others. From 2004 to 2007 UNIFEM provided support or technical assistance to over 90 ministries of gender equality or women's affairs and contributed to the creation or strengthening of more than 100 national and regional non-governmental women's networks and organizations.

24. The most intensive UNIFEM programme of support to national women's machineries has been in Afghanistan, where it led to the establishment of an institutional capacity-building team within the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The team has focused on enhancing capacity of the Technical Deputy Minister and the Planning Department of the Ministry, and backstopping senior staff to enable the Planning Department to maintain a more effective balance between providing technical assistance and working on behalf of the Ministry.

25. Within the framework of the Security Council resolution 1325, UNIFEM support has enabled women in southern Sudan to engage at the international level to make visible the critical gender and women's issues for peacebuilding and reconstruction within the context of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Cabinet has adopted the UNIFEM-supported publication *Gender Justice: Undertakings and Commitments to Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement* as a policy document on gender justice responses. UNIFEM assistance has enabled women members of parliament, across party lines, to meet and formally establish the Sudanese Women's Parliamentary Caucus. The caucus is supporting the development of a draft constitution and governance structure, a major step towards solidarity among women leaders. In Darfur, UNIFEM supported women to engage in the 'Darfur dialogue', working to bring women across lines of conflict to build a common agenda for women in Darfur and to combine this with the demands of women in Khartoum to form a single set of requirements to influence the next round of peace talks.

Enhancing civil society participation in governance

26. New aid modalities offer opportunities for generating increased resources for women's empowerment. In Kenya, UNIFEM manages a 'basket fund on gender and governance', which reached total contributions of over $9.5 million in 2007. The goal is to "transform leadership and governance at all levels in Kenya in order to deliver on poverty reduction, access to basic needs and equality between and among persons." In 2007, it focused on supporting women's political aspirations towards the general elections of

December 2007, assisting 35 organizations in strengthening women's leadership and gender balance in governance at different levels in nearly 200 out of the 210 constituencies. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the results of the Presidential race, according to the Wangari Kinoti Education Center for Women in Democracy, "the recent elections produced the highest number of women legislators in Kenya's history. Fourteen women were elected to Parliament; the previous Parliament had nine... out of the 14, eight are new to Parliament, and one was previously a nominated member. Only four retained their seats".

Challenges and lessons learned

27. Data suggest that support for gender equality and women's rights organizations is waning, while the absorptive capacity of the organizations has not expanded sufficiently to meet new opportunities and needs. The influence of women's organizations on mainstream policy processes is significant, but difficult to measure. UNIFEM intends to further focus its support to women's organizations in the strategic plan, 2008-2011, including by sharpening the mechanisms used to track changes in their capacities and influence with improved tools for monitoring the impact of capacity development initiatives.

D. Outcome 4: Harmful and discriminatory attitudes and practices change to promote and protect the rights of women and girls.

26. Until support for gender equality and women's human rights brings about positive changes in attitudes and behaviors at the micro level, gender equality will remain elusive. There is significant work to be done on changing attitudes and practices to support gender equality in all regions.

Gender-responsive media coverage

28. In 2007 UNIFEM supported increased capacity and reach of media organizations to generate messages and stories in support of gender equality in all regions where it works. UNIFEM is making more consistent use of its goodwill ambassadors, multi-media and the performing arts to support advocacy for concrete outcomes, such as changes in laws or policies. UNIFEM supported efforts in 45 countries to enhance use of media for gender-equality objectives in 2007, including United Nations inter-organization regional campaigns for the '16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women' and campaigns that contributed to the development of national plans to end violence against women in Angola, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

National institutional mechanisms to prevent, reduce and monitor gender-based violence

29. Managed by UNIFEM, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, (with decision-making participation of 21 United Nations and NGO organizations each year), has awarded more than $19 million in grants to 263 projects in 115 countries since its inception in 1997. In 2007, 512 proposals were received, with requests totaling close to $105 million. Programme appraisal committees awarded nearly $5 million to 29 initiatives in 36 countries. Grantee strategies include building awareness of new laws and policies; working with criminal and civil justice systems to develop procedures for investigation and restraining orders; enhancing the capacities of judiciaries, law enforcement and health workers; mobilizing communities, including men and marginalized groups, to put laws and plans into effect and promote their conformity with human rights standards; advocating for adequate budgetary allocations to implement laws and policies; creating data-collection systems and indicators at the national and local levels to assist in monitoring policies and laws; and building momentum through targeted mass-media campaigns.

30. The 'Safe Cities' programme, in partnership with UN-Habitat, UNDP and civil society organizations, supports policy reform, urban planning, and services to keep women safe from violence in selected neighbourhoods throughout Latin America. The programme is creating a model for women-friendly urban renewal whereby women who live in unsafe neighbourhoods walk the streets to identify unsafe spaces and develop proposals to improve them, which are presented and 'validated' by the local government, so that the unsafe situations will be addressed. UNIFEM is sharing lessons learned with local government and NGO partners in Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

Gender disparity in economic resources

31. For many young women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the UNIFEM 'Sabaya' (Young Women) programme, implemented in partnership with UNDP, means a pathway to empowerment. Sabaya centres empower women to become agents of change for a just, peaceful Palestinian society by promoting their participation in the social, economic and political life of their communities. Piloted in 2004, the programme has strengthened 18 women's centres in the West Bank and Gaza to provide legal advice, psycho-social counseling and other support services.

Challenges and lessons learned

32. UNIFEM contributes to closing the gender gap in economic resources and assets by improving women's economic opportunities and organizing; challenging stereotypes that perpetuate inequality in income and wages; and working with public- and private-sector employers to encourage gender equality. An example in 2007 was its ongoing partnership with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa to support women traders by building their capacity to access markets and understand the trade instruments of the Common Market. UNIFEM supported training for women in business and export management in Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, assisting women's associations in focusing services to female informal cross-border traders. The initiative has stimulated policy dialogue between women in business associations and ministries of trade and industry.

33. Specialized skills and methods are needed to document and evaluate progress towards sustainable shifts in attitudes and practices regarding gender equality and women's rights. Investment in developing these skills is critical given the contributions UNIFEM and others make in multi-media and advocacy campaigns. The MYFF evaluation found that the formulation of outcomes and indicators as well as some of the tracking mechanisms to assess progress were inadequate. UNIFEM will expand its work in this area (tracking mechanisms), especially in the context of UN inter-agency partnerships (including with UNICEF and UNFPA) and with regional and national partners.

IV. MYFF 2004-2007: Organizational effectiveness

A. Goal 1: Coherence, relevance and sustainability of UNIFEM.

34. Catalytic UNIFEM programmes can continue to have an impact after UNIFEM involvement has ended when these are replicated or taken to scale by other partners. Between 2004 and 2007, UNIFEM tracked 79 instances of replication or 'upscaling' of initiatives that it supported. Obtaining reliable, up-to-date information on the relevance of its programmes from high quality evaluations – and using the findings to consistently improve performance – is a high priority. UNIFEM undertook 34 evaluations during the MYFF period, including the evaluation of the MYFF framework itself, the findings of which were essential to the development of the strategic plan, 2008-2011.

35. In terms of communications, UNIFEM is moving away from broad-based awareness-raising to a more consistent use of multi-media – including radio, television, the Internet, goodwill ambassadors and the performing arts – in outcome-oriented processes such as supporting national-level efforts to secure the passage of laws to end impunity for perpetrators of violence against women, lobbying for inclusion of women's human rights in new constitutions; and building consensus on positive action policies to generate greater opportunities for women candidates for political office. For example, in partnership with UNDP, UNIFEM supported a targeted publicity campaign in Timor-Leste to promote women as candidates and voters prior to the presidential and legislative elections. Women voters' turnout in the legislative elections was approximately 60 per cent, and women won 28 per cent of seats in the Parliament.

36. In 2007 UNIFEM began to focus its communications strategy on opportunities presented by new media, including 'blogs', social networking sites and text messaging, to build outreach to new constituencies. On 26 November, UNIFEM launched a global internet-based advocacy campaign, 'Say NO to Violence against Women' with UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman (www.sayNOtoviolence.org).

B. Goal 2: Capacity of UNIFEM programmes aligned with demand and opportunities to introduce and support innovation, learning and results.

37. The 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) resolution called upon the United Nations system to "avail itself of UNIFEM's technical experience on gender issues." UNIFEM contributes to United Nations coordination and action, as well as influences United Nations reform processes through its engagement with common country assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) initiatives, to which it provides technical expertise,[1] along with its role in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and United Nations country teams. While numbers are growing, the experience of UNIFEM is that the results are variable; sometimes, their primary result is stronger language in documents (though that result is not sufficient). When successful, they generate stronger commitments and monitoring mechanisms for ensuring that programming and resources benefit gender equality and women's empowerment.

UNIFEM involvement in coordination mechanisms	2004	2005	2006	2007
Millennium Development Goals	15	32	25	23
CCA/UNDAFs	14	37	42	40
PRSPs and national development strategies	19	18	18	33

[1] **UNDAF:** Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Botswana, Burundi, Caribbean (regional), Cape Verde, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, India, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Surinam, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uruguay and Venezuela. **MDGs**: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Cambodia, Caribbean, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia.

38. The proliferation of coordination mechanisms and processes in United Nations reform present both opportunities and challenges for gender equality. UNIFEM is developing innovative approaches to lend its technical expertise more effectively. In southern Africa, UNIFEM chairs the Gender and Human Rights Advisory Group of the Regional Directors Team. The Group has identified capacity gaps in each of the gender theme groups in Eastern and Southern Africa and have trained a broader group of gender equality experts in the subregion so that United Nations country teams have access to a type of 'on-demand' technical support. UNIFEM is engaged with the eight 'delivering as one' country pilots, often in response to United Nations resident coordinator or country team requests. In Albania, for instance, UNIFEM has been designated to coordinate country team efforts to develop a $3.5 million joint programme to improve implementation of the national strategy on gender equality and domestic violence, which falls under the overall national development strategy.

39. The UNIFEM subregional office in Ecuador concluded an agreement in 2006 with the five resident coordinators in the region that they would consult with UNIFEM for technical expertise on gender equality issues. In 2007, this was followed up with a high-level convening to review progress since the agreement. The second annual 'Andean sub-regional meeting of gender focal points and inter-agency gender working groups' included the five resident coordinators and the UNDP Regional Director for Latin America. The group agreed to continue to strengthen inter-organization mechanisms for joint work and developed a work plan for gender-equality initiatives in the region, with the following priority themes: political participation; gender-based violence; and economic, social, and cultural rights. This type of subregional cooperation agreement is being pursued in other regions in the context of implementing the UNIFEM strategic plan over the next four years.

C. Goal 3: Strategic partnerships generate new and expanded constituencies and learning for gender equality.

40. New opportunities to strengthen partnerships with United Nations organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral donors, civil society and private sector partners continued in 2007. In 2007 UNIFEM was a partner in more than 60 interagency initiatives at both field and headquarters levels, compared to approximately 50 in 2006. UNIFEM participated in 13 United Nations joint programmes on gender equality in 2007, compared to seven in 2006. UNIFEM also generates expanded support for gender equality and women's empowerment through coordination and initiation of broad-based United Nations inter-organization partnerships, including as a founding member of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (which now involves 12 United Nations organizations); its leadership of the 17 member UNDG task team on gender equality; and as co-chair, with UNDP, of the UNDG working group on programming policy; as well as its management of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (which involves more than 20 United Nations organizations and civil society experts in deciding on annual grants to innovative government and NGO programmes).

41. UNIFEM most frequently works together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, including on programming related to ending violence against women, gender-responsive budgeting and enhancing women's political participation. UNIFEM is implementing a component of the World Bank Gender Action Plan by supporting a three-year programme on enhancing women's economic empowerment through results-based initiatives in Egypt Kenya, Liberia, the Mekong region and Peru.

D. Goal 4: Management and administration of financial and human resources aligned with commitment to excellence, empowerment and rights.

42. UNIFEM and UNDP made good progress during the MYFF period on updating the operational guidelines that underpin their relationship to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in financial and human resources management. A series of specific delegations of authority from the UNDP Administrator to the UNIFEM Executive Director allows UNIFEM to assume greater authority and responsibility in matters relating to human resources, financial administration, and acquisition and management of property (assets) and services. In 2007, these delegations of authority contributed to the establishment of a UNIFEM human resources centre and enhanced capacity of UNIFEM to achieve greater efficiency through Atlas. Wider and more effective use of Atlas has strengthened the absorptive capacity of UNICEF, enabling it to administer the growing scale and complexity of its operations as its resource base expands and becomes more diversified. In 2007 UNIFEM finalized a risk assessment model, including measures to streamline and simplify operations, and began to roll out a decentralization plan, delegating greater authority to sub-regional offices.

E. Goal 5: Larger, more diversified and more reliable resource base supports capacity of UNIFEM to meet opportunities and commitments.

43. Growth in UNIFEM resources over the period of the MYFF was robust. Total regular resources nearly doubled, from $23 million in 2004 to approximately $44 million in 2007. Total UNIFEM income *doubled* between 2006 and 2007 reaching $115 million, compared with a total income of $57.6 million in 2006. UNIFEM exceeded its MYFF target for core resources in 2007, reaching $44 million (the projected was $40 million). A total of 54 bilateral donors contributed to UNIFEM core funds, compared to 48 in 2006. Key donors increased contributions to core substantially, including Norway, to $8.8 million, and Spain, to $8 million. Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States were the largest overall contributors to UNIFEM. While UNIFEM made good progress on enlarging and diversifying its resource base, the challenge remains to secure a larger resource base that is commensurate with women's needs and the UNIFEM mandate. Also needed are more predictable, multi-year commitments from a larger number of donors, particularly for its regular resources.

Challenges and lessons learned

44. As a key input into the preparation of its strategic plan, 2008-2011, UNIFEM completed an external evaluation to assess implementation of the MYFF in 2007. The evaluation offered useful insights into the gains and gaps in the performance of UNIFEM, as well as the extent of usefulness of the MYFF as a guiding framework for programming. While the findings are too numerous to include here, highlights include the following:

45. *The catalytic role of UNIFEM.* The evaluation highlighted the numerous ways in which UNIFEM has influenced change processes catalytic manner. It recommended that the notion of UNIFEM as a catalyst needs to be clarified further and utilized more systematically to become a meaningful and relevant concept, including in relation to replication and scaling up as 'second degree' catalytic effects. In the next strategic plan, UNIFEM will systematically identify which activities and programmes conform to an agreed definition of a catalytic initiative, assessing how catalytic initiatives stimulate action on replication and scaling up.

46. *Coverage.* The MYFF evaluation noted "widespread agreement among consulted partners" that UNIFEM "has been able to achieve remarkable results with very limited resources .... The only frequently stated criticisms were insufficient presence, insufficient funds and ... running the danger of 'spreading itself too thin' in trying to meet the large existing demands". In the strategic plan, 2008-2011, UNIFEM will build a stable, strategic, cost-effective and relevant subregional presence to support catalytic programming and South-South exchange, as well as high-quality technical advice and quality assurance on gender equality, including in United Nations regional and subregional hubs.